

Cooperating Associations

Ten Little Questions...

...You Should Answer

Cooperating Associations have been in existence since 1947 when the first association was incorporated at Yosemite National Park. Visitor Center bookstores and gift shops are now a familiar sight in National Parks, Forests and throughout many State Parks.

Starting and nurturing a Cooperating Association at your project will take time and effort, but will provide the rewards of enhanced community goodwill, expanded visitor services and a new opportunity for funding for projects and programs.

As great as Cooperating Associations are, they may not be for everyone, or for every project. Associations that show initial promise sometimes fail for lack of clear vision, goals, unrealistic expectations of time and effort, and a solid foundation of support.

*Take some time to answer these ten questions **before** you decide to establish a Cooperating Association:*

- 1. What do you want to accomplish at your park now? What projects/programs would you like to see happen and do they require outside resources?*
- 2. Do you have a Mission or Vision Statement that defines what your project will look like in 5-10 years?*
- 3. Do you think a cooperating association could help you achieve this vision?*
- 4. Do you have any time to devote to establishing an Association?*
- 5. Do you have support from the project manager, District and Division offices?*
- 6. Are there people who can help you from the local community (other agencies, businesses or non-profits)?*

7. *Are there nearby Corps projects that can partner with you and share an association?*
8. *Do you know potential board members in your area with the following skills: legal, accounting, marketing, fundraising, organizing, leadership?*
9. *What are your resources in finding potential board members? (Chambers of Commerce, Volunteer Centers, retirement community, library boards, historical societies, local commissions, schools, garden clubs).*
10. *Are there any businesses, corporations, or Economic Development Commissions in your area that could provide some monetary support for initial expenses?*